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FOLLOW-UP TO THE WORLD SUMMIT FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Agreed conclusions 1996/1 adopted by the Economic and Social Council at its 1996 coordination segment on coordination of the United Nations system activities for poverty eradication

Note by the Secretary-General

INTRODUCTION

1. The Economic and Social Council, at its 1996 coordination segment, adopted agreed conclusions 1996/1 on the coordination of the United Nations system activities for poverty eradication.[1] In a letter dated 4 September 1996, the President of the Council conveyed these agreed conclusions to the Chairman of the Commission for Social Development with a view to drawing the attention of the Commission to these conclusions so that the Commission, in its future work, might take into account the guidance given by the Council.

2. The President of the Council, in his letter, noted in particular a number of steps taken by the Council to harmonize the intergovernmental consideration of poverty eradication and to ensure that the different dimensions of poverty were covered in a complementary way by its functional commissions and by the Council itself, also taking into account other forums in particular policy-making organs of the specialized agencies. He noted that the Council had concluded that its functional commissions should focus on the linkages between their field of competence and poverty eradication.

3. The Council's agreed conclusions stress the primary responsibility of the Commission for Social Development for the follow-up to and review of the implementation of the World Summit for Social Development which considered

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poverty eradication as one of its three core issues. The Secretary-General is requested to report to the Council in 1997 on the implementation of the agreed conclusions. Any action taken by the Commission to implement the agreed conclusions would be included in that report.

4. To facilitate the action that the Commission may take to inform the Council of its activities with respect to implementing the agreed conclusions 1996/1 on poverty eradication, the present note highlights those paragraphs and aspects of the agreed conclusions that are directly addressed to the Commission for Social Development, or have a direct impact on the Commission's work. These are followed by comments that describe activities already planned or undertaken by the Commission. The Commission may wish to consider these comments and options with a view to informing the Council of its activities in the framework of the agreed conclusions.

5. The attention of the Commission is also drawn to part I of the agreed conclusions on coordinated United Nations support and availability of resources for poverty eradication activities at the field level, as well as to part II on mainstreaming the gender perspective in United Nations activities for poverty eradication.

EXCERPTS FROM ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL AGREED CONCLUSIONS 1996/1 ON POVERTY ERADICATION

> Para. 37: "The Council will carry out an overall review of the theme of poverty eradication at a date to be determined, as a contribution to the review of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development. In accordance with their programmes of work as approved by the Council, the relevant functional commissions should, in 1999-2000, prepare technical and focused inputs for the Council's overall review of poverty eradication."

6. As the functional commission with the primary responsibility for the follow-up to and review of the implementation of the World Summit for Social Development, the Commission will play a particularly important role in helping the Economic and Social Council to prepare its overall review of the theme of poverty eradication.

7. At its special session in 1996, the Commission proposed a revised provisional agenda for its thirty-fifth session, subsequently adopted by the Economic and Social Council in its decision 1996/243. The revised agenda incorporates consideration of all substantive issues under one item: Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development.

8. Within the context of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/7 on the follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and the future role of the Commission for Social Development, the Commission's agenda will continue to give priority to a theme each year. At the current session, priority is given to productive employment and sustainable livelihoods, with a focus on three sub-topics drawn from the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development:[2] the centrality of employment in policy formulation, including a broader recognition of work and employment; improving access to productive

resources and infrastructure; and enhanced quality of work and employment. Of these three sub-topics, one - improving access to productive resources and infrastructure - was drawn from the chapter on the eradication of poverty (chap. II) of the Programme of Action. Thus, a natural and direct link was established between the issues of enhancing productive employment and eradicating poverty. This approach is in line with the overall philosophy of the Summit, which recognized the three core issues as intrinsically interlinked.

9. In accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/7, priority at the thirty-sixth session of the Commission in 1998 will be given to promoting social integration and participation of all people and priority at its thirty-seventh session in 1999 will be given to social services for all. These priority topics also include sub-topics directly related to poverty eradication. In the year 2000, the Commission will consider its contribution to the overall review of the implementation of the outcome of the Summit. Thus, in having discussed poverty at its special session of 1996 and considering its priority theme for this year and each of the next three years, the Commission has had and will have ample opportunity to consider poverty eradication and to provide its views and suggestions to the Council as requested.

> Para. 40: "As the functional commission with the primary responsibility for the follow-up to and review of the implementation of the World Summit for Social Development, the Commission for Social Development, in support of the Council's function, should provide an integrated approach to national and international poverty eradication strategies and other areas covered by its mandate. Ongoing efforts to enhance the role of the Commission for Social Development and to improve its functioning in the context of the follow-up to the Summit, should be pursued and deepened, based, inter alia, on the recommendations and decisions adopted at the 1996 special session of the Commission. Adequate Secretariat support to the Commission should be ensured. Task managers should be identified for special issues, so as to involve more closely the concerned specialized agencies and other parts of the United Nations system in supporting the work of the Commission."

10. The Economic and Social Council adopted the recommendations and decisions proposed by the Commission at its special session to improve its functioning and streamline its agenda so as to reflect the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development. The revised agenda will be utilized for the first time at the current session of the Commission. Based on its experience at this session, the Commission will decide to maintain or adapt its agenda for its thirty-sixth session. The Secretary-General will take into account the need to ensure adequate Secretariat support to the Commission in the context of the overall review of the structure of the Secretariat in the economic and social fields.

11. The International Labour Organization acted as task manager for the preparation of the report of the Secretary-General on the priority theme of productive employment and sustainable livelihoods (E/CN.5/1997/3), serving to coordinate the contributions of the United Nations system. Other task managers will be identified for the preparation of future priority themes as appropriate.

> Para. 42: "The Commission on Sustainable Development should focus its work related to poverty in accordance with paragraph 6 of its decision 4/2 on combating poverty. The Commission on Sustainable Development should rely on inputs from the Commission for Social Development, ... as necessary, in order to enhance the implementation of those recommendations of chapter 3 (Combating poverty) of Agenda 21 that correspond to core areas of the World Summit for Social Development ..."

12. Resolution S-1996/1[3] on strategies and actions for the eradication of poverty, adopted by the Commission for Social Development at its special session, should be transmitted to the Commission on Sustainable Development when it prepares the review of the appropriate chapter of Agenda 21[4] at its session in 1997.

> Para. 43: "The Commission on the Status of Women has a special role to play in intergovernmental consideration of poverty eradication ... The Commission on the Status of Women should play a catalytic role in reviewing and promoting the follow-up to the recommendations on gender equality and women's empowerment in the context of poverty eradication of the International Conference on Population and Development, the Fourth World Conference on Women, the World Summit for Social Development, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and other conferences. The Commission for Social Development should draw upon the work of the Commission on the Status of Women in the evaluation of measures adopted by the Summit that relate to various aspects of gender equality."

13. The agreed conclusions and other decisions of the Commission on the Status of Women that relate to poverty eradication or any of the other issues of concern to the Commission for Social Development should be made available to the Commission. In recent years, sessions of the Commission for Social Development were held following the sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women; however, beginning with this year, sessions of the Commission for Social Development will generally precede sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women each calendar year, and hence the information will have to be provided in the following year. Particularly in preparing for its future priority themes, the Commission for Social Development may wish to request in advance specific inputs from the Commission on the Status of Women.

> Para. 44: "The Commission on the Status of Women should determine, in consultation with other functional commissions, the best way to cooperate in reviewing the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in their respective areas in general, and under poverty in particular. Relevant functional commissions should consider having in their agendas a review of the gender implications of policies falling under their competence."

14. The revised agenda for the Commission for Social Development sets out a multi-year programme of work, bearing in mind that the core issues of the Summit are interrelated and interdependent and bearing in mind also that the Commission should apply a gender perspective when discussing the different topics under the multi-year programme of work. Therefore, it is expected that, in all its deliberations, the Commission will apply a gender perspective and review the

gender implications of policies being discussed in relation to the follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development.

15. The Bureau of the Commission for Social Development may consider holding a joint meeting with the Bureau of the Commission on the Status of Women to consider ways and means to cooperate in reviewing the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action[5] in the areas falling under the mandate of the Commission for Social Development and to coordinate mutual inputs to one another's discussions of priority topics, as appropriate.

> Para. 48: "The Commission on Narcotic Drugs and the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice should provide appropriate inputs into the consideration of poverty-related issues by the Commission for Social Development, notably in its discussion of social integration and participation of all people, scheduled for 1998, and into other relevant functional commissions as appropriate."

16. As part of its consideration, in 1998, of the priority theme "Promoting social integration and the participation of all people, including disadvantaged and vulnerable groups and persons", the Commission will consider the sub-theme "Violence, crime and the problem of illicit drugs and substance abuse as factors of social disintegration". The Commission, at its current session, may consider requesting specific inputs from the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice to prepare this sub-theme.

17. The Secretariat will bring to the attention of the Commission for Social Development relevant decisions of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice. The Bureau of the Commission for Social Development might consult with the bureaux of these other commissions to consider ways and means to cooperate in this regard.

> Para. 49: "The mechanisms established by the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) for the follow-up to conferences should support the work of functional commissions on poverty-related issues within their mandates and priorities, and the executive boards of funds and programmes should become more closely involved with their work."

18. At the special session of the Commission in 1996, a dialogue was organized with the chairpersons of the inter-agency task forces on follow-up to international conferences. In its resolution 1996/7, the Economic and Social Council decided that the task forces should inform the Commission and the Council of the progress made in their work for the purpose of system-wide coordination. Accordingly, in the proposed organization of work for the thirty-fifth session of the Commission, there is foreseen the holding of a second dialogue with the chairpersons of the task forces.

19. The work of the ACC inter-agency task forces is expected to be completed by April 1997. Input from these task forces could be made available to the Commission for Social Development as part of its agenda item on follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development at its thirty-sixth session in 1998, and particularly as it begins consideration of the implementation of the outcome of the Summit, starting at its thirty-seventh session in 1999.

20. The Commission may also wish to consider future arrangements for the contributions of the United Nations system to the implementation of the outcome of the Summit and other international conferences, once the mandates of the inter-agency task forces have expired, and make suggestions to the Economic and Social Council accordingly.

> Para. 52: "The elaboration of integrated strategies against poverty falls primarily within the responsibility and competence of Member States. The Commission for Social Development should foster an exchange of national experiences in the formulation and implementation of poverty eradication strategies, plans, programmes and priorities, and take these into account in formulating its views. The Commission for Social Development should present its views on this matter when it reports to the Council on its review of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development."

21. At its special session in 1996, the Commission for Social Development considered strategies and actions for the eradication of poverty and adopted resolution S-1996/1 which provided numerous recommendations to Governments, the United Nations system and organizations of civil society with respect to eradicating poverty and which also, inter alia, stressed the need to periodically monitor, assess and share information on the performance of poverty eradication plans, evaluate policies to combat poverty, and promote an understanding and awareness of poverty and its causes and consequences. As part of its responsibility for follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development, the Commission can serve as the forum for this activity and provide input to the Economic and Social Council.

22. In line with the decision of the General Assembly contained in its resolutions 50/161 and 51/202, in which the Assembly reiterated the Summit's call for Governments to assess on a regular basis national progress towards implementing the outcome of the Summit, possibly in the form of periodic national reports outlining successes, problems and obstacles, the Commission may also wish to invite Governments to provide national reports in the context of its thirty-eighth session in the year 2000, at which time it will make its contribution to the overall review of the implementation of the outcome of the Summit.

> Para. 53: "The Commission for Social Development will examine the theme of 'Social services for all' in 1999 in the context of its multi-year programme of work with a particular focus on education. This examination could also serve as an input into the overall review of the International Conference on Population and Development in 1999. The Commission on Population and Development will not need to conduct a separate discussion of education but should continue to examine education and awareness programmes targeted at population objectives."

23. The Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 1996/7, decided on a multi-year programme of work of the Commission for the consideration of, inter alia, the following priority subjects for the thirty-seventh session of the Commission in 1999: (a) social services for all; and (b) initiation of the overall review of the implementation of the outcome of the Summit, without reference to a particular focus on education. The Commission may decide that it

wishes to place a particular focus on education and, in such a case, may consider inviting the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to serve as task manager for the preparation of this aspect of its priority subject.

24. The Secretariat will bring to the attention of the Commission for Social Development relevant decisions of the Commission on Population and Development. The Bureau of the Commission for Social Development might consult with the Bureau of the Commission on Population and Development to consider ways and means to cooperate in the overall review of the International Conference on Population and Development, particularly in the area of social services for all.

> Para. 54: "Other functional commissions should contribute, as appropriate, to the examination of this theme by the Commission for Social Development through the provision of focused inputs. For example, the Commission for Social Development could draw upon the work of the Commission on Human Rights on the promotion and protection of human rights. Similarly, it could draw upon the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development concerning environmental health and safe drinking water and sanitation. Also, the Commission for Social Development could draw upon the work of the Commission on Population and Development on access to health care, including reproductive health care, and on the work of the Commission on the Status of Women on the theme of education."

> Para. 55: "The Commission for Social Development, in cooperation with the relevant specialized agencies and United Nations organizations, should assist the Council in reviewing the achievement of goals and targets set by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the International Conference on Population and Development, the Fourth World Conference on Women and the World Summit for Social Development in the areas of child and maternal health, basic education, and other areas of basic social services, in the effort to combat poverty, drawing upon the work undertaken by other bodies in charge of promoting and reviewing the implementation of these targets for other conference follow-up. Promoting and reviewing the implementation of the targets in the area of shelter and urban infrastructure could be left to the Commission on Human Settlements and those in the area of water and sanitation to the Commission on Sustainable Development."

25. The Secretariat will bring to the attention of the Commission for Social Development relevant decisions of the other functional commissions mentioned by the Council in order to facilitate their contribution to the Commission's discussion of its priority subject at its thirty-seventh session in 1999. This contribution may include the ongoing work of those commissions with respect to reviewing the achievement of goals and targets set by the relevant international conferences. The documentation requested by the Commission for its thirty-seventh session should also reflect this input.

> Para. 56: "The Commission for Social Development will examine productive employment and sustainable livelihoods in 1997. When dealing with the sub-theme of 'Improving access to productive resources and infrastructure', the Commission should focus on measures that increase such access by people

living in poverty. The Commission for Social Development should build on the work to be undertaken by the Commission on the Status of Women in 1997 on 'Women and the economy' and by the Commission on Sustainable Development on environmentally related aspects of employment. The work of the ACC Inter-Agency Task Force on Employment and Sustainable Livelihoods should be fully taken into account in the preparations for the discussions in the Commission for Social Development."

26. The 1997 session of the Commission on the Status of Women will meet from 10 to 21 March 1997, after the thirty-fifth session of the Commission for Social Development. It will therefore be difficult for the discussions on productive employment and sustainable livelihoods taking place in the Commission for Social Development to build on the work on women and the economy undertaken by the Commission on the Status of Women in 1997. However, advance copies of the background documentation that will be made available to the Commission on the Status of Women on this particular subject could be made available to the Commission for Social Development at its thirty-fifth session. The results of the 1997 session of the Commission on the Status of Women could provide an input to the Commission's review of the implementation of the outcome of the Summit beginning in 1999 in accordance with its multi-year programme of work.

Para. 57: "The Commission for Social Development has an important role concerning the issue of measures for vulnerable groups and social protection, as well as participation. It is to carry out an overall review of the theme of promoting social integration and participation of all people in 1998. The Commission for Social Development, in preparing for and addressing this theme, should take into account the relevant parts of the results of other major conferences and follow-up work being undertaken by the relevant commissions as well as by relevant inter-agency bodies. All relevant functional commissions, including the Commission on Human Rights and the Commission on the Status of Women, as well as the Commission on Human Settlements, should provide inputs to this examination."

27. After its current session, the Bureau of the Commission may wish to be in contact with the bureaux of the other functional commissions mentioned by the Council in order to facilitate their contribution to the Commission's discussion of its priority subject at its thirty-sixth session in 1998: Promoting social integration and participation of all people. Discussion will focus on three sub-themes: (a) promoting social integration through responsive government, full participation in society, non-discrimination, tolerance, equality and social justice; (b) enhancing social protection, reducing vulnerability and enhancing employment opportunities for groups with specific needs; and (c) violence, crime and the problem of illicit drugs and substance abuse as factors of social disintegration. Contributions should include the ongoing work of those commissions in these fields, with particular attention to actions for the eradication of poverty. The documentation requested by the Commission for its thirty-sixth session should also reflect this input.

Notes

[1] See A/51/3 (Part I), chap. III, para. 2.

[2] Report of the World Summit for Social Development, Copenhagen, 6-12 March 1995 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.8), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

[3] See Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1996, Supplement No. 9 (E/1996/29), chap. I, sect. C, para. 3.

[4] Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1997, vol. I, Resolutions Adopted by the Conference (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum), resolution 1, annex II.

[5] Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995 (A/CONF.177/20 and Add.1), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.